



Stranger Things: An AU High School Story by **rebekkaalison**

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Summary: Just your typical high school AU story. Geek boy meets cheerleader girl. Teen angst, drama and love ensues...

1. Chapter One

Author's Note:

Hi everyone. This is my first ever attempt at a story. I absolutely love Mike and Eleven and all of the stories I've read so far. So I thought I'd give it a go.

Please review if you can!

CHAPTER ONE:

Mike slumped his way to the front stairs of Hawkins High. Dustin and Will lagged behind. Still preoccupied with Dustin's brand new station wagon he inherited from his grandfather. Though they all had their licenses, he was the first to actually get a car. Mike doesn't think he's stopped smiling since.

It was the first day of his junior year. The boys hadn't changed much since middle school. Mike was still the president of the AV club and the boys still very much enjoyed their regular games of Dungeons Dragons in Mike's basement. Mike didn't see much for change, the others disagreed. 'This was their year' they had told him. Lucas was trying out for the football team, since he seemed to have gotten more atheletic over the summer and finally had his chance. Dustin was committed to finding himself a girl that didn't scoff in his direction, not having much luck so far though. And Will, well he hasn't told anyone exactly what his big plans for the year are but he promised the boys it would be big.

He was still contemplating on his friends 'changes' when a strong hand gripped his right shoulder and shoved him to the side.

"Out of the way geek boy!"

Mike fell to the ground with an oomph as Billy Skinner pushed him to the side to walk through the front doors of Hawkins High. He looked down at his bleeding palms and brushed the remaining dirt from it with his pant leg, as he did a small hand reached out for his shoulder and squeezed it gently.

"Are you okay?" It was a girls voice. One he recognised quite well but had never heard spoken to him directly.

He looked up to meet soft brown eyes. *Elle Hopper.*

She moved to Hawkins 6 months ago and wasted no time fitting in. A cheerleader and member of the high society of Hawkins High. Beautiful people seemed to have no problem getting it right in high school. And she was the prettiest girl Mike had ever seen. With big brown eyes and matching chocolate brown hair that reached just above her shoulders, her soft pink lips always curled into a smile that brightened her whole face, she was something to look at...

He'd be lying if he said he didn't watch her intently for the first few weeks of her being here. But never got the courage to actually speak to her. And now here she was staring at home, waiting for his response.

When Mike didn't say anything she offered a hand and helped him up. At six foot two he towered over her small frame, with her head just at his chest. Although he filled out a bit through puberty, he still had the same lanky and gangly build he did as a child. It was the reason, he thinks, they knock him around so much. He tends to fall quite easily. Easy pickings for a guy like Billy Skinner; star quarterback. He pushed his long ebony coloured locks out of his eyes so he could see her.

"I'm sorry he did that. He gets a little worked up on game day" she smiled sweetly at him as she tucked a strand of her short curly hair behind her ear. It was her boyfriend, Billy, that knocked Mike down minutes ago.

"No it's fine... I mean it's not fine but it also wasn't you that did it. So basically you have nothing to be sorry for... but I'm fine anyw-"

His rambling was cut short as his friends ran over to join them.

"Dude are you okay?" Will asked conerningly.

"That was so hilarious" Dustin chimed in a moment later.

"Yeah I'm fine and no it wasn't" Mike mumbled as he shoved a

cackling Dustin. His friends curly hair moving wildly as he shook with laughter.

He felt something grab his hand and looked down as Elle brought his hand closer to her.

"You should get the nurse to check this. Just in case." She smiled up at him again as she lowered his arm. "See you around Mike." She started to walk away, Mike dazed after her.

She knows my name...

"And I'll see you tonight Will!" She added quickly over her shoulder before rushing in the double doors of the school just as the home room bell rung.

Dustin and Mike looked at Will questioningly before he shrugged at them and walked through the same doors.

"And why are you seeing Elle Hopper later?" Dustin asked Will with a narrowed expression as they sat down at their normal table in the cafeteria.

Mike was just about to ask the same thing, Dustin beating him to it. He looked at Will expectantly but before the boy could answer Lucas piped in.

"Uhh am I missing something here?"

Dustin quickly explained the incident this morning, pausing midway through to allow Lucas to chuckle at Mike's expense. Mike follows him off before Dustin continued.

"Okay... Will?"

The three boys looked at Will again. Will sighed and explained quietly.

"My mom and her dad have been seeing each other since the summer break. We are now in the weekly family dinner stage." He looked down at his tray, waiting for the other boys to take it in.

"Your mom is dating the sheriff!" Dustin nearshouted. Lucas elbowed him to be quiet as Will looked around to see if anyone heard.

"Elle Hopper has been in your house!" Dustin attempted again, this time in a half yell-half whisper.

"Yeah, she's actually really cool. She asks about you guys sometimes. She asks about Mike quite a bit."

Mike snapped to attention. "She does?"

He didn't hear any response. He looked over at the popular table where she usually sits. She was sitting next Billy while he animatedly spoke with his football friends. She looked bored, her chin resting on her hand as she looked around the cafeteria. Her eyes met with Mike's from across the room. She moved her arm off the table and flashed him a bright smile before looking down at her lap. Mike snatched his eyes away, his cheeks turning red. A little embarrassed she caught him staring.

"Earth to Mike" Lucas repeated, this time waving his hand in front of his face.

"Huh... What" Mike quickly snapped back the conversation.

"I said are you done with the next game yet?"

"Uhh nearly. A few extra plot points to add and it will be ready by next weekend." Mike answered.

"Thank god. We've been waiting forever dude" Dustin snickered. Mike flipped him off in response.

They continued discussing their plans for the next weekend throughout the rest of their lunch period. Mike managed to sneak a couple more glances over to Elle, when she wasn't looking that is.

Mike made it to the biology lab before any other students. Taking a seat right at the front of the room. It was his favourite class.

The other students started to pile in, including Elle who took a seat in the far left corner of the room next to her friend Jennifer Hayes,

fellow cheerleader and popular crowd member.

"Alright. Let's get started. Welcome to AP bio. I see some returning faces and some new ones. Now before we get started, I have been told that this year it will be mandatory seating and lab partner assignments due to some issues last year." Mr Gaunt rolled his eyes as an audible groan rolled off the students in front of him.

"Yes yes I know. What a terrible injustice. Now listen out for your name and join your new partner at a lab bench." He continued.

Mr Gaunt started listing off names and Mike zoned out, not caring who he was going to be paired with, he would end up doing all the work anyway.

He was staring down reading the new textbook they had been given when he heard someone call his name.

"Hey Mike, do you want to sit here at the front?" He looked up to find Elle standing next to him looking at him expectantly.

"Uhh sorry what was that?" He uttered back.

She chuckled slightly. His heart skipped a beat at the sound.

"I said do you want to sit at the front? As in where you are sitting now?" She smiled again at him. He swallowed the lump in his throat.

"Were lab partners?" She nodded at his question. "Uhh yeah we can sit here unless you want to sit somewhere else. I like it up the front but I'll only sit here if you want to as well. I know some people don't like the front of the class. I guess it's kind of nerdy." She started giggling again at his rambling before taking a seat next to him.

"I really don't mind Mike. I like the front too." Mike managed to return her smile before returning his attention to the front of the classroom. Mr Gaunt had started to discuss the cell processes for plant based life. Mike's arm slightly brushed against Elle's. He heart started to beat a little faster.

This is going to be a long year.

He thought to himself. Stealing one more glance at her before sighing contently.

2. Chapter Two

Author Note:

Hey guys,

Thanks so much for following and liking this story. And thank you AliKatt and robyshe! for your lovely comments. I am very new to this and not very good at editing so I'll try my best to review everything before I post it again.

I'm glad you are liking the direction the story is going. I will try and update as regularly as I can. I am currently trying to map out how I want the story to go as I don't want it to go stale and run out of ideas. So bear with me through this!

I'll just say now. This story won't have any supernatural elements like it does in the show. But I will keep the essence of the characters and try and integrate some of the dialogue.

PM me or review for any tips or anything. I love Mike and Eleven stories and would love to read what others have written! Also if someone could tell me how to add a page break in the phone app that would be awesome!

Enjoy chapter two! :)

CHAPTER TWO:

The first few weeks of junior year breezed by for Mike Wheeler. His friends were putting in motion their "this is our year" changes, some with more luck than the others. Lucas had successfully joined the football team, becoming their kicker. Mike wasn't sure what exactly the kicker did though. Lucas wore the jersey for a week straight before his mother forced him to take it off to wash it. He hadn't been spending as much time with Mike, Dustin and Will as he usually did. Spending most afternoons and occasionally mornings at practice. But he remained a permanent member at the boy's regular lunch table, which Mike noticed now had a lot more girls surrounding them.

Dustin wasn't having as much luck as his friend. He had tried to ask out a few girls in the cheerleading team without success before Will pointed out he might be aiming a little too high.

"Maybe try some of the girls that don't spend 80 per cent of their time attached to football player's legs." He had said to Dustin after he returned from the field back to their seats in the stand, dejected after Trina Dyson rejected his invitation to dinner and a movie with a scoff and a resounding 'no'.

"Of course..." Dustin pondered out loud. "The ones that don't get as much attention. Will, you are a genius!" Dustin began scanning the stands for his next target as Will rolled his eyes at his girl-crazy friend.

The boys were at their first football game of the season; missing the first few games because, well because they didn't really want to go. They promised Lucas they would go to at least 3, but they got to choose which games they would attend. The Hawkins Hawks (*how original*, Mike thought to himself) were currently in front by two touchdowns. Lucas successfully converting all points so far. Dustin and Will cheered loudly when the team returned to the field to begin the last quarter. Mike hadn't really been paying attention to the game. Elle being less than 10 metres away in her green and White cheerleading uniform. He couldn't keep his eyes off her. Her hair was pulled into a slick pony tail on the top of her head, revealing her delicate collarbones. She looked up towards the crowd and smiled as they began their warm up cheer for the team. Her eyes landed on Mike and he returned her smile with a wave.

God she is beautiful. He thought to himself. *She also has a boyfriend and would never be interested in a geek like you.* Another internal voice piped in.

He was looking forward to the next few weeks, with Mr Gaunt (their biology teacher) assigning a two month long experiment to each of the lab groups. Biology was not only his favorite subject; it was also becoming his favorite class. The 45 minutes he got to spend sitting next to her was the best part of the day. Most of the time they worked in silence, the majority of the lessons requiring rigorous note taking, but when they did talk, Elle actually seems interested in what

he has to say.

He continued to sneak glances at her during the last quarter of the game, all attention lost on the actual reason he has come tonight in the first place. His friends nudged him when he missed a queue to cheer when Hawkins scored one last time during the final minutes of the game.

Get it together Wheeler. She's taken...

"You are so good at this stuff!" Elle said to him as he leaned over to help her with her cellular structure model. "I don't know what I'd do without you."

"That's okay. What are lab partners for?" She chuckled lightly at his lame attempt of humour and his cheeks reddened.

You are so lame Mike...

"So I assume you want to do something biology related during college then?" She didn't want the conversation to end. She liked hearing him talk, the way he would get nervous and start to ramble. He hasn't initiated much conversation with her since they were assigned to be lab partners. The majority of their comments to each other remaining biology subject related.

"Uhh maybe. I'm not sure yet. I love biology, but I really want to get into MIT. They have this awesome robotics engineering course that gives you a whole semester dedicated to building a fighting robot for their annual robot war competition. Last year my sister and her boyfriend took me -" Mike's face light up in a toothy smile, his dark hair flicking wildly as he animatedly rambled on about robots and MIT.

"-and the robot's arm lifted to reveal this massive chainsaw that drilled right through the smaller one. It was awesome!" He brought his arm up and smashed it into the table, demonstrating the robots movements. He paused looking up at Elle to see her chuckling slightly at his enthusiasm. "I'm sorry. I tend to ramble when I'm nervous or excited about something. Enough about me though, what

made you want to do AP bio? I didn't notice you were in any bio classes last year?" He asked her, noticing her face was a little pink and flushed.

She only just heard him ask her. Still thinking about whether his rambling when talking to her meant he was nervous around her like she felt around him.

"It's kind of stupid and I'll probably never get in for it," she looked down at her notebook, her hair flicking out from behind her ear to cover her face, before continuing "but I've always wanted to be a psychologist. Help people who can't help themselves, you know. People like my mom." She smiled at him slightly before returning back to her notebook to finish the structure Mr Gaunt asked them to draw.

Mike had heard about what happened with her mum of course, that she had taken her life when Elle was young. But he wasn't expecting her to say anything about it to him; I mean they barely knew each other.

"Will told me what happened to your mom. I'm really sorry that happened. I don't know what I'd do without my mom around. Granted my dad is kind of useless." He rested his hand on hers lightly. She thanked him softly and lifted her lips up in a small smile. He wanted to say more but before he could Mr. Gaunt addressed the class from the front of the room.

"Okay class for the remaining 8 minutes for today I will allow you to begin work on your assessment material. Discuss and plan at your will" Mr. Gaunt smiled to himself and returned to his desk as the class erupted into loud discussions.

"So, any ideas robot boy?" Elle asked Mike, staring up at him expectantly. His face reddened at her nickname for him. She was clueless when it came to biology, so she hoped he had something in mind.

"How about an experiment that tests the affect of light on plant growth? I'm sure I can convince Mr. Gaunt to let us complete the assignment outside instead of being in here"

"Sounds amazing!" She said, watching as Mike's mouth curved up into his signature crooked grin. Her heart fluttered a little at it. It wouldn't be the last time...

"So we should probably meet sometime after school this week to do some research for this experiment." Mike quickly mentioned as they were walking out of the classroom.

They were the last ones to leave, Jennifer Hayes knocking his open pencil case off the bench and sending its content everywhere. Elle stayed to help, once again apologizing for her friends' clumsiness, even though they both knew it was on purpose. They both lingered just outside the door as Mike spoke.

"Sure, sounds great. I can't do Monday or Wednesday because of cheerleading practice. Maybe just let-", she was cut off as Billy came and threw her body over his shoulder, making her squeal and laugh at the same time. Mike stood there awkwardly as Billy started to whisk her down the hall as she shouted out to Mike "Let me know when you're free Mike!"

"Ow. Billy put me down!" Mike heard her scream before her laughter filled the hall.

Mike looked down the hall as they continued round the corner, sighing loudly enough for the girl next to him at her locker to look over at him with a curious expression before quickly hurrying down the opposite hall.

It was another few days until they were finally able to meet again, deciding to spend Thursday afternoon in the school library researching for their plant experiment. They were sitting at the back of the library with a bunch of open books Mike had grabbed off the shelves surrounding them.

"I honestly don't think I can read any longer. My brain feels like it's going to explode." She pushed the book she had in front of her slightly forward and leaned back slightly in her chair. She looked over to Mike who was head down in a book about different light

variations, eyebrows furrowed as he looked intently at the spectrum of light chart in front of him.

Man he is cute. The unexpected thought popped into her head before she had a chance to stop it. But it wasn't wrong. His dark curly hair, that reached almost down to and usually curtaining his dark brown eyes, contrasted well over his pale skin, making the freckles that adorned his nose and cheeks stand out. Of course, this isn't the first time she had noticed him. Remembering her first week at school when she spotted him in the front row of their shared English class. He flashed that crooked smile of his right at her as she stood at the front of the class while the teacher introduced her, and she felt that same heart flutter as she did earlier this week in their biology class. It was the Friday of her first week of school when she finally worked up the courage to make conversation with him, making her way to his lunch table he was sitting alone at. It was at that moment when Jennifer Hayes grabbed her arm and invited her over to the football cheerleading table explaining to her how perfect she would be for the squad. She glanced back at Mike's table one last time. He didn't look up until his friends joined him. So Elle went with Jennifer. And the rest, they say, is history. But the next month Elle was on the cheerleading squad, sitting at the 'popular' table and flirting with Billy. Yet she couldn't stop sneaking glances at Mike's table. Hoping he would be looking to. He never was.

"Yeah, I guess we have been at it for a quite a while now. I'll just check these books out and we can come back another time." She almost forgot what she had previously said until Mike started to collect the books on the table. He paused when he felt her hand on his arm.

"Are you sure Mike? I know you wanted to get this done..." She felt bad for making him stop. He looked down at his watch to check the time, but also to move his arm from under her hand before she felt the goosebumps she had given him there from her touch.

He nodded at her. "Yeah it's fine. It's getting kind of late anyway. Did you need a ride home? I've got my mums van today."

She pretended not to notice the quick movement he made to move her arm. A little surprised by his reaction. "Thanks but Billy said he

was spending the afternoon at the school gym. He can give me a ride." She smiled sweetly at his chivalry.

"Oh. Ok cool." He tried to hide his disappointment by focusing on stacking the books into a neat pile.

They finished packing up their things and headed out the front doors of the library. They stood awkwardly at the entrance, staring at each other for a few moments before Mike rushed out a goodbye and turned and walked towards the parking lot. Elle laughed at his sudden departure before heading around the back of the library towards the gym parking lot.

Out of earshot Mike mumbled to himself "stupid, stupid, stupid" before settling into the drivers seat. He watched from his car she rounded the corner of the building. He rubbed his face with his hands before looking at himself in the rear view mirror, "dude what is wrong with you?"

It's just a girl. He silently thought to himself. *Not just a girl. It's Elle.*

"Seriously Wheeler, get it together!" He put the keys into the ignition, started the car and drove out of the car park. Checking once in his mirror to see if she was still there.

Elle continued walking round the school until she reached the car park adjacent to the gym. She could see Billy's car sitting in the lot. As she got closer, she could see the lights were on.

Huh, I thought he wasn't going to be finished until 6. She thought to her self. It was the time she had told him earlier that day that she would be finished with Mike. She looked at her watch on her wrist. 5:30pm.

She continued to walk closer to his truck and she did she could see in to the cabin. She stopped suddenly, her stomach dropped. She could see Billy. But he wasn't alone. Jennifer Hayes was also there. And they were kissing. He was touching her. The same way he touches Elle when they are alone together in his truck on edge of Lake Hodge.

Elle felt sick. She hurried around the side of the building so they couldn't see her, leaned over and emptied her stomach.

This can't be happening. She thought to herself.

She snuck another glance around the side of building. They were still in there... Doing that. She wanted to scream. She wanted to go over and rip both of them out of the car. But instead she ran. She kept running until she reached the front step of her and her father's cabin. It was only when she stopped running did she start to cry. Her face, hot from the run, felt the tears stream down her face.

Her dad would notice. What would she tell him? He liked Billy. I mean everyone did. He was the star quarterback. The perfect boyfriend. Hawkins perfect boy.

She popped her key into the lock and walked inside.

"Hey kiddo, how was the studying?" Her dad shouted from the kitchen. Presumably cooking up her favourite dinner. Eggos and cream. He wasn't the best at cooking. Usually gone for most of the night for work.

When she didn't reply, Jim turn around the corner and watched as she walked straight to her room and slammed the door. He sighed and headed back to the kitchen. That's the thing about Jim and Elle. They left each other alone when they needed it. They understood that sometimes they need their space. It was how they survived after her mom died.

Elle slammed the door behind her. She was hurting. Her heart hurt. Her stomach hurt. Her brain hurt.

How could he? She thought angrily.

She looked over at her vanity mirror. Pictures of her with Billy and Jennifer lined the sides. She grabbed it one off the mirror one by one, ripping them into tiny pieces and throwing them on the floor.

She threw off her shoes and crawled into the safety of her duvet. She stayed there for the rest of the night. Crying and screaming into the pillow until she fell asleep. She awoke only once to her dad knocking

on her bedroom door.

"Hey Elle Belle, you want some eggos? Made especially for you." She smiled into her pillow. She wished she could enjoy them, they were her favourite and she hardly gets to spend time with her dad. But she couldn't move. She didn't want to move.

"No thanks dad, I'm not hungry right now" she replied softly. Trying her best to sound normal. She didn't want him to worry.

"Okay. I'll put them in the fridge for tomorrow's breakfast. Goodnight kiddo." Jim replied, a whisper through the door.

"Good night dad."

"Oh before I forget, Billy called for you. Wanted to know why you didn't wait for him to drive you home. I told him you weren't feeling well. Sleep tight."

At the mention of his name she started crying again, this time into her pillow so her dad wouldn't hear.

As Mike laid in bed, trying to get some sleep, he kept thinking about how soft Elle's hand on his felt on his arm earlier that afternoon. He looked over to his alarm clock.

01:30 AM

He grabbed his supecomm. Remembering something Will had said at lunch a few weeks before. Hopefully he's still up. But not caring either way. He wanted to know before he forgets again.

"Will come in, do you copy? Over." He whispered into the walkie. Careful not to wake the rest of his family.

He waited five minutes before trying again. This time a voice came through on the other end.

"Ugh, yes I copy. It's 1:30 Mike. What's wrong? Over." Will replied in a groggy tone.

"The other day at lunch. You said Elle asks about me. What does she ask about? Over." He asked eagerly.

"Seriously... You seriously woke me up for that.." Mike waited for Will to say over before replying. Not hearing it he clicked on his supercomm.

"Will you have to say over. Over."

"Mike, it's late. Can we talk about this tomorrow? Over."

"Please Will. I just need to know. Over."

"Okay, fine. She asked about what you are like, what you are all like really. What we do when we are together. Once she asked if you had a girlfriend. Stuff like that. Over."

"Asked? You mean she doesn't anymore? Over"

"Goodnight Mike. Over and out."

Mike threw his supercomm by the bed. Feeling only halfway satisfied he rolled to the side and drifted off to sleep.

3. Chapter Three

Authors Note:

Hey guys!

Chapter 3 is finished! Yay! I hope you like it.

I know its going a bit slow, but I want to make sure its building at a realistic speed.

Please review if you can! They are like super motivating and make me write faster!

I'll also just mention quickly to all the Lumax fans out there: I'm sorry! I do like them together, but I love Dustin and Max more. :)

I apologise if the editing it is not great. Like I said I'm not great at it. Also I wanted to get this out as I will be busy for the next few days. Ill try an update soon though!

enjoy! xx

CHAPTER THREE:

Elle looked down at the green and white uniform she had laid out on her bedspread. She grimaced at it. She really didn't want to put it on. It felt wrong just looking at it. Like everything was a lie. Her seemingly perfect boyfriend betrayed her. Her best friend, her closest confidant for the past 6 months, betrayed her. How can she face them without crying? Hell, how can she face them without screaming at them "I know what you did! I know and I hate you both."

She knew the best thing would be to break it off with them both, tell them she never wants to see them again. But she didn't want it to be so easy of them to get away with it. Not when she was hurting so bad.

She had to pretend. She had to pretend everything was ok until she could hurt them like they hurt her.

"Elle, breakfast is ready!" She heard her dad shout from the kitchen. She was still nervous facing him. Scared he was going to ask her if she was ok.

He's been through so much and he's finally happy. Don't make him worry" she thought to herself.

"I'll be out in a minute, I'm just getting changed." She yelled back through the door.

She looked back down at her cheerleading uniform. "Here we go" she whispered to herself before swiping the outfit off the bed and pulling the uniform overhead.

She went to open the door to her bedroom door when she caught her reflection in the vanity mirror. She stepped in front of it. Taking one last look at herself in the mirror, she couldn't bring herself to smile.

You can do this Elle. They will get what they deserve and you will be the one coming out on top.

Her internal pep talk worked. She grinned wildly at herself in the mirror before walking out to the kitchen.

"Morning kiddo" Jim leant over and run his hand through her hair.

"Dad. My hair..." she flattened down the stray curls that he loosened. She would chuck it into a high pony later. The required hair style for the cheerleaders during home games (Jennifer's idea).

She smiled up at him, shaking her head as he chuckled to himself. She hoped she could keep up the charade. She didn't want to tell her dad what she saw yesterday. He would be mad. Mad enough to want to hurt the guy who hurt his little girl. No, she wanted to be the one to hurt Billy.

She watched as Jim, already dressed in his Sherrie uniform but also adorned in a light pink cooking apron she had gotten him once as a gag gift, set down a plate of pancakes with syrup in front of her.

"Love hearts?" She asked, surprised by the oddly shaped heart pancake that were hastily stacked on her plate.

"For Valentine's Day silly."

"Oh right. Of course." She has completely forgotten that was today. She felt a slight pang of guilt. This was their day. Usually celebrated as a couple's day, it meant something else for the Hopper's.

With it being just the two of them for so long, they found themselves creating a tradition for every Valentine's Day. Her dad would make her heart shaped pancakes, albeit usually not the best shaped ones, and then they would eat breakfast together, which they usually didn't get many chances to do. Then they would come home later in the afternoon and Elle would make the snickerdoodle cookies from the recipe she found amongst her mother's things when she was fourteen (her dad's favourite), and they would spend the night watching her mother's favourite movie, *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*.

This year was different though. Her dad has Joyce and she has Billy. She cringed internally. She couldn't ruin her dad's date with Joyce tonight. He has been so happy later. She definitely couldn't tell him yet.

"You okay Elle?" She snapped out of her thoughts quickly. Looking up at her dad's concerned face.

"Yeah, I'm fine." He eyed her carefully. "I promise dad. This look amazing." She added a thick layer of syrup and began shovelling bits of pancake into her mouth.

"I'm sorry we can't hang out tonight kiddo. Joyce has made some dinner plans tonight for us. I'm sure Billy has planned something special for you."

"I'm sure he has..." she quickly shoved more food into her mouth, hoping it would end any more discussion about Billy and Valentine's Day.

"I know I haven't been around as much, between work and Joyce we haven't had the chance to spend as much time together. And I'm sorry about that Elle Belle"

"Dad it's okay. Really. I like Joyce and I'm happy if you're happy."

"How about tomorrow night we pick up our usual Valentine's plans. I'll finish early, you make those delicious cookies and we will watch our movie."

She got up from her seat at their small dining table and kissed his cheek.

"Sounds perfect." She washed her used plate in the sink and wished her dad a great day before grabbing her bag from the living room couch where she left it last night and made her way out the door.

You can do this Elle... she thought to herself as she headed in the direction of the school.

Mike, Will and Lucas were sitting at their usual table when they heard some shout and the sound of a tray table hitting the floor.

"Sorry!" A family voice shouted before his family red cap came into view. Attached to it an out of breath and sweaty Dustin. He came crashing into the table, knocking over and spilling Lucas' open orange sofa onto his lap. He stood up abruptly, frantically wiping at the orange stain that was starting to appear on the bottom of his shirt.

"Dustin!" Lucas hugged loudly. "Oh man, look at my jersey. It's game day today dude." He threw the dirty napkin onto his tray before sulking away and out the cafeteria doors.

"Nice one Dustin. Now he'll be moody all afternoon." Will says, watching Lucas walk through the doors. He turns to Dustin expectantly.

"He'll be fine. I've got news!" Dustin's eyes widened as his mouth lifted into a wide grin. "You'll never guess who laughed at one of my jokes in trig today!"

Both Mike and Will groaned. Dustin figured himself as the class clown in his mathematics classes. Maths puns being his specialty. However most of the time, the jokes kind of feel flat. Not because they were bad jokes, in fact Mike thinks there are quite clever. But that's the problem. Dustin was the smartest in most of his classes and

the jokes often times went over his peer's heads.

"Think someone that would give you a funny look if you tried to talk to them." Dustin continued. His smile not wavering.

"Uhh Jennifer Hayes?" Will guessed.

"Jennifer Hayes what?" Lucas chimes in, having just returned from the bathroom. The orange stain only mildly dulled by his attempt to clean his shirt.

Dustin quickly explained to Lucas before turning his attention back to Will. "And no, not Jennifer."

"Oh. I know. That girl with the wonky eye! What's her name... Cheree!" Lucas exclaimed. The other boys turned to face him. Matching scowls on their faces. "What?" He continued, confused at their reaction, "she looks at everyone funny."

Dustin grabbed a chip of Mike's lunch tray, launching it in Lucas' direction. Lucas flinched as it hit him square between the eyes, sending sauce down the side of his face.

Dustin was the first to erupt into hysterics, Will and Mike not far behind him. Dustin grabbed a second chip off Mike's tray before dipping it in the sauce resting on Lucas' cheek, narrowly avoiding his friend hand as he swatted him away, before popping it into his mouth. The boys laughter turned into a cackle, loud enough to garner the attention of some sophomore girls at the table next to them. Mike heard one of them mumble "What a bunch of dorks" before continuing her conversation.

"So who was it Dustin?" Mike asked finally, knowing they will never be able to guess it right.

"Max Mayfield." Dustin said, his precious grin now returned and plastered to his face. He looked over to where the red headed girl usually sat alone in the corner of the room. "I think I'm in love."

"No. No way. You're lying." Mike said shaking his head.

"100% nothing but the truth." Dustin said, whipping back his

attention to his friends. "It was a joke about pi. I can't remember it exactly. But I remember hearing her giggle from the back of the room. It was like hearing an angel laugh"

This time it was Lucas who erupted into laughter.

"Dude you are crazy. Mad max. She will eat you alive."

"What do you mean?"

"Have you not heard what they say about her. She's mean dude. Like full on ice queen." Lucas nodded as Dustin looked at him incredulously.

"I guess I have never actually seen her talk to anyone before" Mike agreed half-heartedly.

"Dustin, don't listen to them. I'm sure she isn't anything like that." Will said, ever the voice of reason.

"The only time I've ever heard her talk was when she was telling someone to shut up or fuck off." Lucas said casually, wiping the remaining sauce splotches off his face.

Mike watched as his curly haired friend sighed sadly before taking another quick glance in Max's direction. She didn't look up.

"Well," Dustin began, his smile returning once again to his hopeful face, "I guess this human torch is going to have to melt the ice queen's heart."

"No no no. Dustin what are you planning?" Will's tone filled with suspicion, his eyes narrowing in his direction. "Please don't do anything stupid."

Dustin's eyebrows furrowed slightly, "when do I ever do anything stupid!" He scoffed back.

The others gave each other a shared look.

"Always." They exclaimed together. Sending them into another riot of laughter.

The end of lunch bell ended their teasing of Dustin. Mike stole a glance over towards the spot where Elle usually sat. She wasn't there. He was hoping to catch her before biology, but it would have to wait. He hurriedly packed away his tray before walking quickly towards the biology lab. He had to speak to Mr Gaunt. An idea popping into his head late last night as he wrestled with his tired mind.

Elle had managed to avoid them most of the day. She caught a quick glance at Billy this morning as she headed towards her locker, he was there waiting for her with what looked like a rose in his hand. She quickly threw herself into the nearest toilet door and hide in the stall until the home room bell sounded. She waited a few moments, cursing Billy for having to hide and making her late for home room. A couple of the girls from the cheerleading squad noticed she was acting strangely and asked if she was okay. She assured them she was fine. She understood their concern, being her "friend", but she couldn't tell them the truth. Not when they would go and say something to Jennifer and ruin Elle's plan for revenge. A plan she was yet to actually come up with.

She spent her lunch period in the library, using her history paper as an excuse to remove herself from the cafeteria, away from the two people who crushed her. But now, as Elle made her way through the school halls, she knew she was going to have to deal with Jennifer, who in her mind still believed them to be friends.

As she rounded the corner, entering the door to the lab, she sighed in relief as Jennifer was not yet in the classroom.

She noticed Mike speaking intently with Mr Gaunt at the front of the room. He gave her a quick smile and wave, which she gingerly returned. Mike noticed that the smile didn't reach her eyes.

She went to take a seat at their shared bench, dropping her heavy book bag with an 'oomph'. She hadn't had the chance to get to her locker, Billy being there between classes. Mike suddenly appeared before her, a huge smile adorned on his face. Elle thought he looked amazing when he smiled.

"Great news!" He exclaimed. Elle gave him a puzzled look, eyebrow

raised in question. "Mr Gaunt is allowing us to complete our experiment in the school's old greenhouse."

"Hawkins has a greenhouse?"

"Uhh yeah, it's really old and probably full of spiders." He watched as she shuddered at the thought of having to share a space with spiders, "but it will be perfect for our experiment. He says we can start today, since we will probably have to clean it out first." He started to pick up his book bag and a box full of gardening supplies she only just noticed he had sitting at their desk.

She followed his lead, collecting her things and following him out the door. Eternally grateful for Mike and his idea for their experiment being one that had to be done outside, away from the other students. Well one student in particular.

As they left, he collided with Jennifer as she was walking in through the door.

"Watch where you're going dork." She gave Mike a sour look before turning her attention to Elle. Elle froze as she heard Jennifer say "oh Elle, I haven't seen you all day!" As her 'friend' went to hug her, Elle moved suddenly and stepped closer to Mike, resting her hand on his shoulder and pushing him slightly further down the hall.

"Yeah sorry, I've been kinda busy today catching up on school work and stuff. We uh have to go though. I'll see you later." She really hoped she didn't have to.

Mike silently watched the exchange, trying to ignore the hand Elle still had pressed to his shoulder. After Jennifer shrugged and entered the classroom, Elle let out a breath she didn't realise she had been holding.

"Elle?" She looked at up at Mike as he said her name softly. "Are you okay?"

She nodded her head up at him, her solemn expression changing into a forced smile. She hoped he didn't notice her weird behaviour.

"Yeah, totally fine. Shall we?" She gestured for him to move forward.

He gave her a small smile and moved forwards towards the school's doors.

They walked in silence. Mike leading Elle through the back of the school, across the football field and into the woods that lined behind it.

"You aren't planning on murdering me out here are you?" She paused just before the tree line.

Mike was glad she broke the silence, he was awkwardly stealing glances at her throughout the walk. Desperately trying to think of something to say. Each time he went to say something, a part of his brain hesitating.

He turned to look at her, chuckling at her comment before replying "not unless it's death by exhaustion. I'm sorry it's so far out. It's not much farther, I promise. You can follow behind me if you like, I'll take down all the spider webs for you."

She smiled widely at his chivalry. Her first real smile for the day.

"That's so sweet of you. Thanks Mike." She noticed his cheeks blush slightly and his lips curved into that crooked grin, her heart fluttered slightly and she looked down so he wouldn't see her own blush form on her cheeks.

I bet Mike would never cheat on you. She was gasped audibly when the thought came into her head, specifically when the thought was followed up by one wondering by how it would feel if she reached up and pressed her lips against his. Mike turned suddenly and looked at her worriedly.

"Sorry, there was a bee" she said quickly, happy with her excuse, "it's gone now." She finished when she saw him start to look around for it.

"Oh. Okay. I'll keep going then?" He asked her questioningly. She smiled in response, giving a quick nod. He turned back to face the front and continued through the brush.

Nice one Elle... she threw her head back in quiet embarrassment. Shaking the thoughts of Mike out of her head before following him

on the path.

It was a few more metres before the trees along the path started to thin out. As they reached the end of the trail they were on, a small decrepit building appeared before them. Nature had taken over the small structure, years of neglect evident by its appearance. The roof was caved in on one side, a branch from the tree above having fallen and landing on it. Weeds as tall as Elle surrounded the sides of the building, covering the windows like a thick curtain.

She looked at Mike with a frown, expecting a similar expression.

They have to work in that? She thought to herself.

Clearly Mike didn't feel the same. She watched him shrug his shoulders and yank open the door to the greenhouse, taking a few weeds that had grown in front of it with it.

He looked at Elle excitedly from inside the greenhouse, "let's get started." His excited expression turned her frown into a small smile and she followed him inside.

It took a while to clean out the greenhouse. Mike had been clever enough to bring some gloves from them each and a single apron that he gave to her. She tried to give it back to him, telling him that he was the one to bring it.

"It's okay. My clothes aren't that great anyway." She looked over at him, he was wearing dark brown slacks with a green collared shirt poking out under his signature grey and brown woolly sweater. She thought he suited it, that it looked cute on him. "Besides, you better keep that uniform clean." He gestured to her long-sleeved cheerleading top and skirt. She took the apron and beamed at him.

Why can't all guys be like Mike?

They continued cleaning out the greenhouse for the next 40 minutes. Occasionally stealing glances at each other when the other wasn't looking. About 10 minutes into their cleaning Elle accidentally knocked into him after a spider circled down in front of her, sending

them both falling to the floor. Elle landing on top of Mike, their faces mere inches from each other. They stared at each other for a long time, Elle taking in her the almost mesmerising pattern of freckles on his cheeks. Mike cleared his throat suddenly and Elle snapped out of her daze, quickly pushing herself off of him and picking up the broom she previously was using. She apologised for knocking him down, with him telling her it was no problem, "happy to break your fall" he had lamely added.

Mike spent the last 30 minutes of their time together remembering how it felt to have her body pressed against him. His teenage thoughts overtaking his brain.

Their walk back to the school grounds was not nearly as awkward as their previous walk to the greenhouse. They talked the whole way back, Mike finally having the courage to say something without hesitation. They talked about Mike's family (she was surprised to find he had two sisters), Elle's life before Hawkins, her dad and his work as Hawkins' new sheriff. Mike watched her talk excitedly about how happy she was that her dad had found someone like Joyce. He wished the walk was longer, not wanting his time with her to end so quickly.

As they reached the doors, Mike grabbed the handle to pull it open. Elle grabbed his arm suddenly and he turned to face her. His breath catching in his throat when he looked at her. Her mouth was slightly open, the whisper of a thought waiting to escape from her soft pink lips. Her curly hair was blowing wildly in the wind. Mike had the sudden urge to tuck a strand behind her ear.

Wow. he thought to silently to himself. She's so beautiful... and touching me. His eyes widened slightly at this sudden realisation. *Get it together man...*

She isn't really sure why she stopped him from opening the door. She definitely didn't have anything to say, but he was now looking at her. Expecting her to say something.

Quick Elle, think. "Thank you." She said lamely. She dropped her hand from his arm and looked down at her feet. Avoiding his curious gaze.

"For what?" he replied.

For being so chivalrous. For taking her away from the hell that would have been being in biology with Jennifer. For making her heart flutter when he looked in her direction. She recited in her head. She couldn't tell him what she was really thankful for, so she settled with "for organizing everything for today. For the experiment. I'm really lucky to have you as a partner." She smiled warmly up at him. Mike noticed that it reached her eyes this time.

Mike felt the redness spreading from his neck up to his cheeks at her words. He turned to walk through the door, not knowing how to respond to her comment. As he did, his face hit a hard-wooden surface. He bounced back slightly, his hand reaching up to feel a lump growing right above his left eye. In his dazed state he realised that he hadn't actually opened the door, distracted by Elle and her soft hands and deep brown eyes.

"Oh my gosh, Mike. Are you okay?" Elle reached up to feel his head. Her face inches away from his own.

"Uhh yeah just wanted to make sure the door was sturdy." he balled his hand into a fist and knocked on the wood a few times. "It certainly is."

Elle looked at him in concern one last time before breaking out into a giggle. Her laugh was infectious, with Mike soon joining her. As they stood on the top stair of the school entrance, Mike decided that Elle's laugh was his new favourite sound.

Elle wiped the tear that started to fall from eye as Mike quickly check his watch. The bell would ring soon, both of them unaware that they were sharing the same thought.

Please don't let it ring. Please don't let this period be over.

They both stood there smiling at each other, wishing someone would say something. Mike swallowed the lump the rose in his throat. About to ask her what period she had left. A lame subject, he knew, but he couldn't keep standing here staring at her like a creep.

The end of period bell rung loudly from the speaker above them. Both jumped in surprise, their attention turning back to the door. Mike opened it carefully before gesturing for her to enter.

"Thanks!" She flashed him a smile over her shoulder, tucking a strand of hair behind her ear at the same time, before turning back to walk forwards through the door.

Mike nearly fell over. He felt like one of those lovesick losers he sees in the romance movies his mum likes to watch.

They said their goodbyes to each other quickly before heading in different direction towards their lockers. He stood a few feet away, watching her smile as Billy handed her a rose and kiss her. He turned away quickly, not wanting to see anymore and headed down the hall to where Dustin was standing at his locker.

Great work Mike, you didn't even wish her a happy Valentine's Day you moron.

Elle quickly reached her locker after saying goodbye to Mike. She was smiling to herself thoughtfully, replaying in her head the hopeful expression she saw sweep across his face when she told him she would see him later. She reached her locker, finally Billy free, thankful she could empty her heavy book bag. She put in her locker combination and quickly returned her books to their places. She grabbed her history textbook, stuffing it into her book bag before closing the lock shut. She jumped back in surprise as Billy's face suddenly appeared where the lock door had just been.

"Hey babe!" he smirked at her. She instantly felt her stomach churn. She used to love his smirk. But now she couldn't even look at him. "I haven't seen you all day. I have something for you." He finished in his smooth voice.

Is that the voice he uses when he speaks to Jennifer?

She shook the thought from her mind, desperately trying to keep it together. She didn't want to him to think anything was wrong with her. Not yet anyway.

"What is it?" She replied sweetly, in the most normal voice she could muster. Barely able to manage a small smile.

He pulled his hand from behind his back and handed her a single red rose. He enclosed it in her hand before reaching up to peck her quickly on the lips.

She froze in place. He noticed her stiffness and shook her slightly by her shoulders.

"You okay Elle?"

She quickly thanked him for the rose before making her way quickly down the halls and out the school's front doors. She needed air. She needed to be away from him. She needed to be sick.

She rushed around the corner of the building, only just registering someone yell "dude, what the hell!" in a high-pitched voice before leaning over and emptying her stomach.

A pair of vans appeared into her vision, Elle pushed herself back up and looked at the redheaded girl with an apologetic expression.

"Oh, it's you." Max grunted angrily. Rolling her eyes at the brown-haired girl in front of her and stepping around her to walk back into the school.

Elle leaned back against the wall roughly and sunk down to the ground. She couldn't hold it in anymore, tears she had been holding back for most of the day finally breaking free and rolling down her face.

Max stopped at the sight of her the girl breaking down in front of her, a girl she used to call her best friend. She couldn't leave her like this. She sighed loudly, making her way back down the stairs and taking a seat next to her.

"Are you okay?" she asked reluctantly.

"Why does everyone keep asking me that?" Elle replied back.

"Maybe because you are just threw up on my shoes and are now

crying hysterically. I mean, not usually behaviour if I say so myself." Max sarcastically retorted.

Elle looked up to see Max eyeing her carefully.

"I'm sorry about your shoes. But I'm fine. Really fucking fantastic actually." Max went to stand, realising there wasn't anything to do to help her when she heard Elle whisper quietly, "Why are guys such assholes?"

She quickly sat back down, "because they can get away with it." Max explained quietly, looking towards the car park.

"Max." Elle said softly. "I'm sorry for being a shitty person to you last year. I wish I could go back and do things differently. God, I wish that so much right now."

Max had been the only person Elle knew when she moved to Hawkins 6 months ago, their dads having been friends when they lived in Indianapolis. Max and her had been friends since they were 12 when Max's parents moved to the city from California and their dads had been apart of the same precinct. Then when Max turned 16, her parents divorced. Her dad moving back to California and her mom moving back to her hometown in Hawkins. They stayed in touch and we both thrilled when Jim told Elle that they would be moving to Hawkins in the fall. Max was sick with the flu, the first week Elle started at Hawkins High. Not being able to show her around or spend any time with her. It was during this week where Elle met Jennifer and starting hanging out with that crowd. Elle and Max grew apart. Elle joining the cheerleading team, spending every moment with Jennifer and beginning a relationship with Billy meant she had little time to spend with Max. Max, still angry about her parent's divorce, built her own reputation in school. Spending most of her time by herself, she was often seen skateboarding around the school, skipping class and graffitiing the back wall of the school parking lot (and spending equal amount of time in detention for it).

Max looked at Elle in the present, taking in her dishevelled and miserable appearance. She didn't look anything like the cheery popular girl she had been the past 6 months. What happened to her, Max thought to herself.

"It's okay Elle. Things didn't seem to have worked out for you anyway." She smiled warmly at her. Elle chuckled slightly, not surprised by her comment. "What happened anyway? Billy leave you for another cheerleader." She was only joking when she said it so she was shocked when Elle simply nodded her head at her.

"Well not leave me." She added.

"That bastard!" Max exclaimed. "I hope you kicked his ass."

"He doesn't know I know." Elle replied quietly. Max looked at her confused.

"Why the hell not?"

"I want to hurt them like they hurt me. Breaking up with him doesn't feel like enough." Elle finally said aloud. "But now that I think about it, it's a stupid idea." She added quickly after taking in max's dumbfounded expression.

"No. I think its genius. What did you have in mind?" Max's face turned into an evil smirk.

"I don't actually know. I haven't been able to think of anything very cunning." Elle admitted, looking down at her hands.

The belle for next period suddenly surrounded them.

"What do you have this period?" Max asked suddenly, an idea forming in her head.

"Uhh history with Ms Jordan."

"Let's skip. I have an idea. If you're in." Max stood up and held her hand out in front of Elle.

Elle grabbed the red-headed girls hand and grinned widely. "I'm in. Let's destroy them."

The two friends shared a quick laugh before heading towards the back of the school.

4. Chapter Four

Author's Note:

Hey guys!

Thanks again for your lovely words. You guys are awesome and seriously make my day.

I'm sorry there is so little Mike and Eleven in this chapter. These parts are coming I swear.

Enjoy. R&R as always. :)

CHAPTER FOUR:

"So Jennifer has gym this period right?" Max whispered to Elle quietly. They were currently making their way to the cafeteria, Elle wasn't sure exactly why. Something about getting supplies Max had told Elle.

"Uhh yeah, they will be in the gym playing volleyball." Elle replied in the same whispered tone.

"Perfect!" Max grinned widely at the other girl's response. Her mind slowly forming the perfect plan.

"She looks like the type to moisturize." She said aloud, more to herself than to Elle. "Facial stuff?" she turned to Elle questioningly.

"Yeah, she has a whole routine I guess." Elle's interest reached maximum peak now. *What was this girl planning?*

"It's almost too easy." Max mumbled quietly, a slight chuckle in her voice.

"Can I ask what you are planning?" Elle asked interestedly. Her curious gaze resting on the wild eyed red headed girl walking beside her.

"All in good time my friend." Max replied, claspings Elle on the shoulder quickly before taking off ahead of her. Elle dragged behind, almost completely lost in her thoughts.

Elle was surprised at the use of the word friend. Were they friends again now? Cause Elle could really use one right now. She knew none of her cheerleading buddies could ever help her with what she was about to, not wanting to go up against the head cheerleader and risk their own lives in the popular crowd.

But here was Max. Her best friend that she had basically ignored for the past 6 months joining her revenge plan willingly. Was she doing it to help her? Or was this just because she wanted something to do? Elle is well aware of Max's trouble making behavior at school.

Elle paused suddenly, shifting her eyes around the halls in hesitation.

Why is she helping me? She thought to herself silently.

Max had walked slightly ahead, now reaching out to pull open the doors to the cafeteria. She stopped when she noticed Elle's change from determined to hesitant.

"Are you coming?" she eyed Elle questioningly.

Max let go of the door handle and walked over to stand next to Elle, still frozen in the middle of the hall. *They are gonna caught if she doesn't move*, Max thought to herself.

When Elle didn't move or say anything in return she went to speak up again "Elle, we really have to go. We can't be stan-"

Elle's attention quickly snapped back to Max, cutting off the other's girls pleas she bursts out the thought suddenly.

"Why are you helping me Max?"

Max's eyes widened at the unexpected question. Max give a quick thought to her question but the answer was pretty obvious to her. She smiled to herself before giving her response.

"Because I know you would do it for me."

Elle felt her heart twinge a little at Max's answer. Of course she would say something to make her feel even worse about what happened between them when she moved here...

"But I've been so horrible to you since I moved here. I treated you like you were nothing to me." Guilt was thick in her tone, the overwhelming feeling she got whenever she looked at Max soaked in her words.

"Look Elle, we may have stopped hanging out. And honestly it sucked for me watching you become *one of them*." Max scrunched her face up at the thought of all those months watching her friend turn into a cheerleading barbie, it felt wrong. But the girl standing in front of her now was definitely the girl she called her best friend. The girl that she used to play with in the kiddie pool in the front yard every hot Sunday afternoon, the girl who she shared the details of her first kiss with (Derek Muller with way too much tongue), and the girl who cried with her when Max's parents told her that they were getting divorced. "But I never stopped wanting to be your friend. And if someone hurts you, then I'm going to make them pay. I made that promise to you when we were kids, and I intend to keep it." Max felt mushy just saying it, but she was happy when Elle perked up at her words. She was taken aback when Elle suddenly threw her arms around Max's neck and pulled the girl into a sweet embrace. Max smiled against Elle's shoulder before bring her arms up to wrap around the smaller girl and gave her a light squeeze.

Elle felt her eyes start to well up at the corners, "thanks Max." she added thoughtfully before slowing pulling apart. "I'm ready." She stated surely, "Let's do this."

Max watched the brown-haired girl march over to the cafeteria doors and pull them open.

Atta girl! Max said to herself, before following Elle inside quietly.

Mike isn't sure why he agreed to help Dustin with his stupid plan. He knew very well that whenever Dustin planned something it usually ended up going to shit. But there was something about his lovesick best friend's hopeful and pleading face that he just couldn't say no.

Maybe because you know the feeling of being lovesick too.

He shook the thought away quickly. His mind steering clear girl from a certain brown-haired brown-eyed beauty. He really shouldn't be thinking about her. She had a boyfriend. And not just any boyfriend either. A boyfriend that could kick his ass if he had any idea of the thoughts Mike was having about her.

So Mike had told Dustin he would help him.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you!" Dustin exclaimed reaching up to hug his tall friend. Mike pushed him away quickly, noticing a couple of cheerleaders down the hall eyeing them with a sneer. Mike watched them mumble something to each other before giggling uncontrollably before walking down the hall.

Great, not only are you frogface. You'll now be frogface with a boyfriend. Perfect way to get Elle's attention... His thoughts automatically connecting themselves to Elle. They were doing that a lot lately.

"Alright so, all we need to do now is get Max's locker number." Dustin said matter of factly, turning to walk forwards. Mike followed behind him reluctantly.

"Ok... and how are you going to do that?"

"We're going to get it from the office's files." Dustin smiled up at him before continuing, clearly ignoring Mike's concerned expression. "I'll distract Penelope, the office lady, and you will sneak in behind her and take a look at the locker combination file in the back office."

"Hang on" Mike grabbed Dustin's shoulder suddenly, stopping him in his tracks. "Why do I have to get the locker combination? You're the one that needs it." Mike eyes him suspiciously.

"I know that Mike." He pauses slightly, "but you aren't nearly as charming." Mike rolls his eyes, knowing his friend is right. Mike could never pull that off. Nerves turning him into a rambling, sweaty mess.

They slowly made their way to the office, both having study hall this period and knowing their presences wont be missed. Dustin

continued to reveal his plan to Mike.

"Then I will drop this into her locker." Mike watched Dustin curiously as he swung his bag in front of him, unzipped the top pocket and shove it under Mike's face. Mike looked down to see it filled with multiple packets of red vines.

"Red vines?" he asked confused.

"Yeah, it's her favorite."

"And how do you know that? You've never even spoken to her."

"Mike," Dustin grasps his friend's shoulder lightly as he continues "Max and I don't need words. Our connection runs deeper than that." His voice full of admiration as he stared longingly into the distance.

Dustin breaks away from his daze and begins to zip up his bag, he notices the look Mike is giving him, quietly adding "and I see her eat them all the time."

Mike chuckles at him, "why don't you just give her a card like a normal person?"

"A card? Really?" Dustin asks dumbfounded, like it's the stupidest thing he's ever heard. "That's way too basic of a Valentine's gift Mike."

Mike shrugs at him in response.

"Besides food is the language of love. How many times have I said that to you guys?"

"Once. Just now."

They continued to bicker until they rounded the last hall towards the office. As they did, Mike collided suddenly with someone turning the corner at the same time, his tall frame sending them careening to the ground. He reached out quickly to grab them as they fell backwards.

"Oh my god, I'm really sorry. I didn't see you there."

Mike looked down at the small person in his arms. Elle beamed back

at him. Her arms grabbing the ones that had a hold on her.

"It's ok Mike. Thanks for catching me." She flashed a smile up at him. He lost the ability to speak, to do anything really but stare at her. He stood there awkwardly, his hands still gripping her.

No wonder I can't get her out of my head. Her hair was pulled up into a high ponytail again, pulling the curls away from her face. He took in everything about her, taking a mental image of her face. The smallness and delicate nature of her face, pushing thoughts of Mike's hands cupped around it into his head. He was getting lost in the depth of her big brown eyes, the softness of which was currently locked with his own, neither of them wanting to look away. His eyes shifted slightly to take in her soft pink lips, his mind once again taking him to a place where his name escaped them before he took them with his own...

It was Dustin's voice that broke his thought process. Mike had completely forgotten that there was other people even around.

She has a boyfriend. She has a boyfriend. She has a boyfriend. He repeated to himself over and over again.

"Hi Max." His curly haired friend said to the girl standing next to Elle. Mike looked over to them. Max, whose attention had been on Elle and Mike and the tension that filled the air between them, suddenly looked at Dustin.

"Do I know you?" she asked incredulously, eyeing him carefully.

"Uh we have trig together. You probably don't see me, I sit at the front." Mike winced at his friend's attempt to hid his disappointment. His huge smile faltering at her words.

"Right. Pun boy." She added dismissively, clearly wanting the conversation to end.

Dustin didn't seem to take notice, he perked back up at her name for him. "Yeah, that's me. But my real name is Dustin!" he exclaimed, a little too loudly.

Mike was watching the exchange carefully when he heard Elle's voice

quietly in front of him.

"uhh Mike, you can let me go now."

Mike snatched his hands away like they were touching smoothing scolding, his face reddening at his stupidity.

You wastiod Mike.

He relaxed when she chuckled at him softly. His smile returning to his face at the sound of her laughing, even if it is at him.

"What are you guys doing out here anyway?" She asked up at him, her head tilted to the side as she eyed him suspiciously.

Mike looked over at Dustin quickly. His friend shook his head at him pleadingly, mouthing something along the lines of "don't say anything" to him.

"Uhh we are just heading to the.. uhh... the..." he struggled to think of something, anything, not really sure of what to say.

"We are just heading to the bathroom." Dustin cut in suddenly.

"Right, to the bathroom." Mike repeated, nodding his head a few too many times to be normal. "What about you guys? Don't you have history this period?" The thought came out of his mouth before his brain could stop them. He really hoped it didn't come off stalkerish.

Elle's eyes widened slightly at his question, curious to how he would know that. But before she could say anything Max spoke up.

"Yeah, she does. Just a personal emergency. Girl related." She gave the boys a knowing look. A chuckle nearly escaped her lips as she watched their expressions quickly change from curious, to confused to realization.

Elle gave a Max 'what the hell' look before turning bright pink. "... Right, a girl emergency." She agreed slowly through gritted teeth. "And we'll be going now..." she added, smiling quickly at the guys in front of them before looking back her giggling friend.

Elle grabbed Max's elbow quickly and pulled her down the hall. She couldn't get away fast enough.

"Max!" She looked back quickly to where their interactions with the boys just occurred. Mike was still standing there, watching her leave. When their eyes met, he quickly looked away, his face turning a darker red than before, and turned the corner. "Why did you tell them that?"

Why is he so impossibly cute?

"Why do you care what those dweebs think?" She asked Elle, confused as to why it mattered.

Elle sighed loudly, ignoring her friend's questioning gaze. "I don't." She said casually. Hoping she had managed to convince Max that she didn't care.

In her head she repeated what she really thought: *Because she doesn't want a cute guy like Mike to know those things about her.*

"Max what are we doing in here?" Elle asks as she watched Max check the name on each locker. She didn't get a response, the other girl too preoccupied with her mission.

"If you are looking for Jennifer's locker it's around here." She walks past the next few aisles of lockers before stopping at the front of the one marked with Jennifer's handwriting.

J. Hayes

Max squeals in delight. "Do you know the combo?" she inquires hopefully.

Elle quickly puts in the combination. Jennifer's birthday. It was easy to remember, it being a few days before her own.

"Again, this is way too easy." Max repeats her earlier comment again. She smirks as she opens the locker and pulls out a bottle branded as facial moisturizer.

Elle watches curiously as Max untwists the cap and pulls it aside. She reaches into her pocket and pulls out the blue food coloring they had taken from the cafeteria moments before.

Oh. Elle thought, finally connecting the dots.

Max glances up at Elle as she starts cackling wildly. She brings her finger up to her lips, shushing the girl's laughter in an instance.

"Sorry." Elle whispers in return. "You are so evil. I love it." The girls share a small giggle before Max hands the bottle of food dye to Elle.

"Would you like to do the honors?"

"Definitely." She grabs the tiny bottle from Max's hand and empties its contents into the bigger bottle sitting on the bench.

Moments later, the girls are waiting casually outside the doors of the locker room, having just watched the students return from the gymnasium.

Elle waited impatiently, the anticipation almost killing her. She ran through a few scenarios in her head, picturing her ex-best friend's face turning a violent blue. She could barely keep the smile off her face.

A few minutes later, students started to leave the locker room. *Dammit, it didn't work.* She looked to Max in disappointment.

Max gave her a small smile and a comforting shrug, "we will think of something else." She assured her, and beginning to walk away from their spot near the doors.

Suddenly, a shrill high-pitched scream came from the locker room.

The girls shrink narrowly avoided the doors as they swung open. A frantic Jennifer, with a face as blue as blueberry pie, barged through them. Two of her cronies followed her out.

"Jennifer just show us, it can't be that bad." One of them said, not really believing her own words.

"No!" She screamed at them. Her face now hidden behind her hands. "Bring my stuff to my car. I'm calling my mum!" She ran down the hall towards the office door.

Max and stood there for a minute, staring in the direction Jennifer just left in. They turned to each other slowly. The moment their eyes met, they erupted into a riot of laughs. Elle raised her hand to Max. The other girl slapped her hand against Elle's in victory.

One down. Elle thought to herself. One to go...

This is not going to work.

Those were the thoughts troubling Mike as he sat down in one the chairs available in office. The office secretary, Penelope, eyed him questioningly, her eyes huge under her thick rimmed glasses.

"I'm just waiting for the guidance counselor" he offered in explanation. She shrugged her shoulders and turnback to her desk. Mike smiled at himself satisfyingly. *That worked, good.*

He eyed the door to the office a few times. Dustin was supposed to come through them and distract Penelope while Mike snuck around the back and grab the file where they kept everyone's names and locker combinations.

Dustin suddenly appeared at the window of the office door. Giving Mike a wide smile and thumbs up through the glass before opening the door with a neutral expression.

Penelope looked up as Dustin entered, greeting him warmly. "Afternoon Dustin!"

"Well if it isn't my favorite person in the entire school." He flashed her a toothy grin.

She scoffed at him in slight embarrassment. "Right back at you!" They shared a quick laugh before she spoke again, "what can I do for you today?"

Mike watched the interaction curiously. Maybe he was as charming

as he thinks he is, he thought to himself. He suddenly remembered why they were really there. Quietly standing up and making his way to the back of the office, where the filing cabinets were located.

Jesus, there's heaps of them. How is supposed to find it?

He was partly listening to the conversation Dustin was sharing with Penelope, something about Dustin's cat Mews and a problem with her paw. Penelope had four cats herself (big surprise) and was questioning Dustin about the problem (maybe she could help).

Dustin looked over Penelope's shoulder at Mike, giving him a hurried expression. Mike gestured wildly to the drawers, hoping Dustin understood what he was asking.

Dustin turned his attention back to Penelope. "Poor Mews, its her *left* paw, *third* claw that's bothering her. Mom is worried sick." Dustin said, emphasizing the words Mike needed him to hear.

Mike turned back to the filing cabinet. *Left side, third drawer.* He repeated to himself. He quickly opened the drawer, careful not to make any noise. He found the file almost immediately before grabbing and closing the drawer again. He turned to give Dustin their planned signal, a single thumbs up.

As Mike was about to raise his hand, the office door flung open. Startling all three people in the room. Jennifer Hayes entered the room, her face bright blue in color.

"Call my mother now!" she cried loudly at Penelope.

Mike and Dustin looked at each other wide eyed as Penelope turned around quickly to grab the phone. She stopped suddenly when she saw Mike standing there, file in his hand and eyes wide.

"What on earth are you doing back here?" She asked him angrily. Mike dropped the file onto the ground.

Shit. I knew it. He gave a frustrated sigh, as Dustin sunk face into his hands.

Max and Elle were currently standing in front of Billy's truck, parked in the lot outside the gym entrance. Max had given Elle a spare black hoodie she had stashed in her locker, to be incognito, she had told her.

Elle had to admit she was a bit conspicuous in her cheerleading uniform, it usually brings quite a lot of attention. I mean, that's how she first meets Billy. His eyes meeting hers out on the field during her first cheerleading practice. She still remembers the dark flirty expression he had given her when he came up to her afterwards.

"What did you want to write?" Max said, pulling Elle from her thoughts, and handing her a can of red spray paint.

She decided to go simple but direct. Max quickly showed her how to work the can as they started to spray angry red letters across the black truck doors.

Elle was just about finished the final letter when she heard someone shout from the entrance of the gymnasium.

"What the hell do you think you're doing?!" She recognized Billy's voice immediately, despite its angry tone. A tone he never used with her before.

"Shit, Elle we gotta go now." Max whispered to her and started pulling her hand to run away from the scene of the crime. Elle yanked her hand away

"No. No more pretending." Elle said decisively. "You can run if you want. I don't want you to get in trouble too" She said sweetly.

"No way! We go down together." Max gave her a quick wink before adding, "here he comes." She nodded in the direction of Billy, both girls watching as he ran over to his car.

Elle pulled down the hoodie from her head as he approached. Slowing down as he noticed her standing there, the spray can still grasped tightly in her small hand.

"Elle, what the hell are doing?" He glanced over at her handiwork, "Did you write asshole on my car? My dad only just gave it to me,

this won't come off! What the hell is wrong with you?" he was furious with her. This being the first time he had ever screamed at her in anger.

But it was nothing to what she felt. The image of Billy with his hands and mouth all over Jennifer suddenly appeared in her mind.

"Elle. Can you hear me?!" he shouted again, this time coming to stand right in front of her, his face inches from her own.

Big mistake. She thought quickly. She took a step back from, let out the breath she had been holding and punched him full force in the nose.

It had hurt her hand and she shook it slightly, wincing in pain. But all pain was forgotten as she looked down at Billy, crumpled down before her.

He was on his knees, having fallen down when her hand collided with his face, clutching at his nose. Blood was seeping out from underneath his hands. "Ow! I think you broke it."

"Good." She said simply before turning around to walk away with Max.

She noticed max wasn't staring at her, but past her and past Billy too, her mouth hanging open. She saw lips mouth a curse. Elle snapped back around to follow her gaze.

"Oh shit." She whispered to herself as she saw Vice Principal Turner stood there with his hands across his chest.

"Dustin, do you copy? Over." Mike angrily spoke into the supercomm he had picked up the second he entered his room.

"Yeah, Mike. I'm here. Over." He heard a reluctant Dustin speak back to him through the microphone.

"Nice going dude. Not only do I have detention for the next 2 weeks but now my mom has taken away all car privileges. Why do I even listen to you and your stupid plans. over and out." He threw the supercomm on his bed, not wanting to hear his friends attempt at an

apology.

Karen Wheeler was furious when Mike asked her to sign his detention slip.

"Two weeks Michael?" She shook her head at him over the counter as she leaned down the sign the form. "What were you thinking?"

"Mum it wasn't my idea, I swear. Dustin made me help him." He pleaded with her.

"So if you're friend jumped off a cliff, you would jump too." His dad added, not helpfully, from his recliner in the lounge room. Mike heard his older sister Nancy snicker from the couch, she was back for a short break from college in New York. He flipped her off behind his mom's back and she poked her tongue out playfully in return.

"Michael, we expect more. You know that."

"Yes mom, I'm sorry." he replied, he hated when she looked at him like that. Like she was losing her little boy.

"Maye you should take away his driving privileges." Nancy suggested, flipping him off this time.

"Great idea Nancy. No driving for the next two weeks." Karen stated dismissively.

"But mom..."

"Michael, its final. You'll have to take your bike or get your friends to drive you."

He groaned, took his slip from his mother's outstretched hand and made his way to his bedroom, slamming the door and angrily reaching for his supercomm.

He threw his head back onto the pillow after his memory of the previous interaction with his mom.

"This sucks..."

Elle walked into the station late that Friday evening. Flo, the police chief's secretary greeting her warmly and offering her a cup of tea.

"Yes please," Elle replied warmly, "One sugar."

"Of course dear. Your dad is just in his office." She pointed to the door that lead to her father's space.

Elle knew he was going to be mad at her for what happened today. Detention for two weeks the vice principal had given them. Only after Elle had actually explained what had caused their vagrancy.

"I don't much go for teenage drama Miss Hopper, and I certainly don't like it running its course in my school" his nasally voice had explained to her after she tried to explain.

She gave the window a quick knock before poking her head inside the door.

"Hey dad, it's only me." She added, not really wanting to disturb him if he was busy. "Sorry if you are busy, I just wanted to stop by before heading home."

"I'm never busy for you kiddo. Come in." he gestured for her to come inside and shut the door behind her. "I'm just about done here tonight anyway. How about we grab some takeout and head home?"

She nodded at him, returning his warm smile. She stood awkwardly in the middle of the room as he collected his things. She had never been in trouble before, being a policeman's daughter had always ensured she did the right thing, so she was incredibly nervous to bring up the detention thing.

"Hey dad" she watched as he stopped what he was doing to look at her, waiting for her to continue. "I uhh, need you to sign this detention slip." She held the slip out to him and felt it lift out of her fingers as he grabbed it.

"Detention? You?" He asked surprised. "Elle you've never had detention before." He read the form carefully. "Vandalism Elle? What's going on? The other night you came home inconsolable and now this. You can talk to me honey. You know that?" He didn't sound

mad, more disappointed. Elle even detected a twinge of guilt.

God she hates disappointing him. She wants to tell him, really she does. But she can't bring the words to leave her lips.

"Elle?" This time his voice full of concern, undoes the package she had all this shit wrapped up in.

She explained what happened that day she saw Billy and Jennifer in his truck, how broken she felt knowing that the two people who were supposed to look out for her at school had betrayed her, and about what Max and her (Mayfield?, he asked) got up to today and how good it felt to get back at them.

She couldn't control herself as tears and words released from her. Her dad took her into a warm embrace.

"It's okay Elle Belle." He squeezed her against him tighter, "I just wish you had told me."

"I know dad, I'm sorry. What Max and I did was stupid. We shouldn't have done it."

"Yeah, it was stupid." he agreed. She tensed, anticipating the lecture she was about to receive. she was choked though when he continued with, "but I'm proud of you kid."

She leaned away from him slightly, staring up at his amused expression. "What?"

"You stood up for yourself. Not a lot of people have the guts to do that. So I'm proud of you kid." he continued thoughtfully.

She chuckled at his proud papa face and reached up to kiss his cheeks. "Thanks dad!"

"You're welcome." He reached over to collect his keys and his police hat. "Now about that take away huh?"

It was a few days later when she heard that Billy was pulled over one morning driving to school. Max had come rushing over to her locker one morning, cackling about a defective tail light ticket he received.

She smiled to herself when max had told her.

My dad is awesome.

5. Chapter Five

Author Note:

Hey guys! I'm sorry this has taken so long and is probably a little rushed! I have been promoted at work so shit has been crazy lately. My updates might be slow as I get used to my new job but I will try and update longer chapters to make up for it. Anyway, enjoy the beginning of some detention filled fun!

Lots of love. xx

CHAPTER FIVE:

Detention Week One - Monday:

"You have completely lost your mind if you think that the Thing could destroy Wolverine!"

Was the first thing Mike heard when he reached their usual lunch table. Lucas and Dustin seemed to be in a heated debate, not uncommon during their time spent in the cafeteria. They both glanced at Mike as he placed his tray on the table and took a seat.

"Mike, please tell this moron he is crazy." Lucas pleaded with him, his hands moving animatedly with his words.

"It's a known fact: rock beats scissors. Everybody knows this." Dustin explained carefully.

Mike looked to the quiet boy at the end of the table. He shook his head slightly before giving an exasperated explanation.

"They've been going at it for ten minutes now." Will said quietly, only loud enough for Mike to hear.

Mike turned his attention back to the tray table in front of him, cold pizza and a side of what looked like peas from 1970 sat unappealingly in front of him. He was in the midst of memories of home packed lunches when he felt Lucas nudge him slightly.

"Huh, that's an interesting new development." Lucas pointed over to a table a little farther away in the corner.

Mike, Dustin and Will followed his gaze to the usual table of Max Mayfield. She was sitting there as per normal, sketching something on her shoe. But this time there was someone sitting across from her. Mike couldn't make out the other person, their back facing his direction and people walking between them blocking his view. Max's head suddenly lifted from its position and she nodded her head towards the boys table. He watched as the other person she was with slowly turned their head. It was the eyes he saw first, they opened in surprise as she locked gazes with the four boys staring at her. All four of the boys quickly turned their heads into different directions, pretending they were looking elsewhere. Mike saw from the corner of his eye as Elle smiled to herself and turned back to Max, who shared her amused expression.

"What's Elle doing sitting with her?" Lucas was the first one to break the awkward silence that had formed by their being caught, "shouldn't she be over there?" His nodded in the direction of the cheerleaders and football players table as he said it.

"Weird right?! They were together when Mike literally ran into them last Friday." Dustin piped in.

"Not that weird actually." Will said quietly.

The others turned their attention to their soft spoken friend.

"What do you mean?" Mike asked slowly, his attention paramount now that Elle was the topic of discussion.

"I heard mom talking to Jim the oth-"

"Hold up. Jim?" Lucas quickly cut in. Mike gave him a 'shut up' look before Will continued.

"Jim Hopper. The chief of police, Elle's dad. Anyway I heard them talking yesterday Elle. I think Elle punched Billy in the face. After she wrote something on his car with red spray paint. She has detention for the next two weeks because of it. Jim said he deserved it after

what he did with another cheerleader or something like that." Will paused while the others stared, mouths agape at him. "So that's why it's not that weird... I guess."

The boys all spoke at the same time.

"Graffiti? Well that explains Max then." Said Lucas.

"She punched him? That's so badass." Dustin retorted admiringly.

"She'll be in detention?" Mike added. The end of day punishment now becoming something he was looking forward to.

Mike was already seated at their shared bench in the biology lab when she walked in. She gave a small wave as she entered through the door. Mike wanted to say something to her about the Billy thing Will had mentioned at lunch. He had rehearsed it in his head on the walk to biology.

'I'm really sorry to hear about Billy.'

'So that sucks about Billy huh?'

'You're better off without him...'

But as he looked down at her seated next to him, her hair curling down and covering her face as she leant over her notebook, all previous thoughts vanished. She no longer had a boyfriend... Everything felt different now.

Mike suddenly become very aware of everything he was doing.

How he was going to sound, whether what he was going to say was going to be stupid...

How his hair looked, did he brush it this morning? Probably not...

Did he smell ok, he didn't use aftershave and usually just put on the dated old spice he dad had given him ages okay...

Oh god, she was looking at him. He hadn't noticed her shift her eyes

up to meet his. How long had he been staring at her?

"Mike, are you alright? You look like you've seen a ghost." She asked him, concern etched on her face. He was pale white, well paler than usual and his eyes were wide.

"I'm totally fine!" He replied his voice a little too high. He cleared his throat quickly before trying to get out what he wanted to before. "Actually I wanted to tell you that –"

"Alright everyone, quiet now. This lesson will be on the next midterm. So I suggest you all start listening." Mr. Gaunt suddenly interrupted from the front of the room.

Mike didn't know if he was relived or disappointed. He wasn't really sure what he was going to say to Elle and he really didn't want to make a fool of himself even more. He quickly opened his notebook and began taking notes when Mr. Gaunt started his lecture.

Why am I so lame? Mike thought to himself, internally face palming at his weirdness. *She's going to think I'm such a lameo.*

He didn't seem to notice her disappointed expression flash across her face when he didn't finish his sentence. She liked talking to Mike, hearing his voice and watching him nervously ramble to her made her feel giddy, like a little school girl with a crush on the boy that pulls her ponytail.

Mike didn't look at her throughout the lesson, too focused on keeping up with Mr. Gaunt's lesson on _.

When the end of period bell sounded, Mike quickly gathered his things before rushing out of the room.

Okay... that was a little weird. Elle remarked to herself before collecting her own books and returning them to her bag.

She didn't couldn't focus for the rest of the day. Her mind preoccupied with why Mike was acting so weird. He seemed scared around her. Maybe Will told him what she did to Billy's car; she knew Jim had something to Joyce. God, she hoped he didn't think she would do things like that often.

She was standing at her locker, freeing her bag from the heavy textbooks when someone grabbed her shoulder from behind her.

"Hey!"

Elle jumped from the person's grasp, her heart pounding against her chest. She relaxed slightly when she saw it was Max.

"You scared the crap out of me!" She gave the other girl a small punch to the arm as she said it.

"Oh you'll live. You ready for detention badass?" Max began punching the air like a punching bag as she said it.

Elle reached out and pulled her friend's hands down. "No, and don't call me that. This was a one-time thing. I can't disappoint my dad again."

Max chuckled slightly, "We'll see about that..." she added quietly.

The girls were still giggling when they walked into the detention room. It was a small windowless room in the back end of the school, its musky and damp smell filled the room. It reminded Elle of the basement in her old house in the city. *'It's old and gross and I'm never going down there'*, she had told her dad. Now she had to spend the next two hours stuck in a room just like it.

There were two other people in the room already. Elle recognized the ebony mop of hair almost immediately. He was sitting at the front; even in detention he was impossibly dorky. She also noticed Dustin sitting beside him, trying to engage him in conversation. Mike seemed to have sensed her gaze; his head lifted slightly and caught her eyes watching him carefully. Dustin also looked up suddenly, noticed Max standing in the doorway and smiled widely at her.

Max noticed him looking and quickly grabbed Elle by the elbow, pulling her friend to the back of the room to take one of the seats there.

"You dweebs know this is the detention room right? AV club is down the hall." Max directed at the boys. She felt Elle nudge her slightly in the leg. She flashed an apologetic look to Mike, who gave her a look back.

suddenly shot back to his notebook when she turned to look at him.

"Yeah we know. We are stuck here for the next two weeks." Dustin explained, trying to sound casual as he said it.

"Us too." Elle add quietly in return. Mike couldn't help himself, he grinned to himself. Two weeks he gets to share a room with her for 2 hours, biology never seeming long enough for his liking. *I must be dreaming...* he thought to himself, giving himself a small pinch on his forearm just to check.

"What are you in for?" Max asked suspiciously.

Dustin turned to Mike with panic, eyes wide. He silently pleaded with Mike not to say anything.

Mike opened his mouth to offer an answer when Vice Principal Turner entered the room.

"Vandalism and theft will not be tolerated here in my school."

"Theft? " Max whispered to Elle.

Elle ignored her snickering. Focusing on Mr Turner as he addressed the four students in front of him.

"You will sit here for the next two hours and hopefully reflect on your past grievances. Do I make myself clear? Miss Mayfield?" He directed Max specially to Max as he noticed her eyes wandering around the classroom.

"Crystal Mr Turner." She gave him a sarcastic thumbs up. He smirked at her, walked towards the back of the room and stopped in front of Max's desk. He held his hand out and gave her a knowing look. Elle, Dustin and Mike watched as she rolled her eyes and grabbed the black marker she had in her back pocket and placed it on his hand.

Dustin's snicker made Mr Turners head snap back to the front of the room.

"Alright." Mr Turner checked his wrist watch before taking the seat at the front desk. "Detention has now begun."

90 minutes later...

Elle sat bored at the desk, her chin resting on her hand. She had finished her assigned homework 15 minutes ago and was sitting there with nothing else to do. Max had pulled another marker out from her hoodie pocket, winking at Elle before starting to doodle on her white vans. Dustin had fallen asleep almost straight away and was now drooling on his desk, his red cap somehow managing to stay glued to his head.

Mike had taken out a notebook from his bag and began furiously writing, pausing occasionally to scribble something out or mumble to himself quietly. Elle could

Elle had managed to take a few glances at him when he wasn't looking every now and then, but now with nothing else for her to do, she watched him work. She wanted to go over and ask what he was working on, not just because she was curious to know what had him so focused, but also just to hear his voice again.

She unconsciously made a move to stand up but stopped abruptly when she saw Mr. Turner eyeing her carefully. Elle smiled at him innocently before pretending to stretch out her back, quickly taking a seat back down at the desk.

She brought her attention back to Mike, noticing his eyebrow furrowed while he scribbled quickly along the page, which he was doing a lot, and it made her heart jump when he let himself give a small smile when he got something right.

He's so cute when he's focused. She thought to herself, that schoolgirl crush feeling returning to her and awakening the butterflies in her stomach.

Mike could feel her gaze on him. He wanted to look at her, but after the embarrassing moment in biology earlier he needed to keep it cool. He didn't want her thinking he was some dork with a crush on the unattainable cheerleader. But who was he kidding? He was the dork with a crush on the unattainable cheerleader. There was just no way someone like Elle would ever like someone like Mike. They were from different worlds. The realization hit him deep in the pit of his

stomach.

You'll always just be lab partners. Get used to it buddy...

Elle and Max exited the school together, Max stopping to get her skateboard on her way out. She was now riding it beside Elle as they walked across the school parking lot together. Elle saw in the distance as Dustin and Mike hopped into the beat up station wagon Elle assumed belonged to the curly haired boy.

Max noticed the direction of her friends gaze and rolled her eyes. She had seen her staring quite a few times at the taller one. She didn't remember his name, Matt or Mike or something like that.

"What's with the googly eyes?"

Elle's head snapped to Max's direction. "Uhh, what are you talking?" She replied innocently.

"I mean you and the tall kid. He could hardly keep his eyes off you during lunch. And I totally saw you staring at him in detention. You like in love with him or something?"

"Who, Mike?" She questioned, Max gave a quick nod of her head in response. "No, I'm not in love with Mike. We are..." Elle didn't really know what they were. Were they friends? They didn't hang out at lunch or at school, and she didn't really know that much about him, besides what she had heard from Will. But she wanted to, she wanted to know what he liked, his favorite movie, his favorite color, she wanted to know everything she can.

"You guys are what?" Max said, breaking Elle's train of thought.

"We are just lab partners I guess." Her answer seemed to disappoint Max, who was clearly hoping for something else. Elle also felt disappointment wash over her, this wasn't enough for her. She was going to learn more about Mike. She had too.

Detention Week One - Tuesday:

"You're dweeb boyfriend is staring at you again." Max said suddenly,

her words breaking the silence that had fallen between them.

Max and Elle were sitting at the lunch table in the back corner of the cafeteria, both picking at the slush that was supposed to be their 'nutritious' lunch.

"Will you stop? He's not my boyfriend okay." Elle spat back. Max hadn't given up on the whole Mike thing. Constantly asking about him. It was starting to get on her nerves.

"Whatever you say..." Max mumbled back, still not totally convinced.

"Don't even start Max. What about you and Dustin huh?"

"Dustin?" Max asked, feigning confusion. Elle glared at her.

"The dork with the hat?" Max retorted in fake shock.

Elle nodded reluctantly. She really didn't like agreeing with her friends name for Will's group of friends.

"I don't think I've ever seen a guy look so love struck before, and I've seen you smile at his charm and every now and then." Elle replied teasingly.

Max purposefully ignored her, not wanting the discussion of her love life to be the topic of conversation any longer.

"You know, one of these days someone is going to melt that ice cold heart of yours." Elle added after seeing the dead eyed expression Max had given her at the mention of Dustin's crush.

"Maybe, but I highly doubt it'll be someone from the nerd herd." Her gaze shifted slightly to something behind Elle. "Speaking of, here comes your nerd prince now."

Elle turned around in her chair just as Mike reached their table. He stood awkwardly beside her chair, his hands fidgeting in front of him.

"Hey Elle." He said shyly.

"Hey Mike." She smiled up at him and the reason he came over here

completely left his mind. *What did I want to say to her?*

"What's up?" Elle prompted when Mike stood quietly without saying anything. "Is that about biology class?" Knowing it was the only thing that they currently had in common, besides detention.

"Biology?" Mike asked confused. *What is biology again?* His dazed mind thought before snapping quickly back to attention. "Uhh yeah... Sorry, I was hoping to catch you beforehand to let you know to meet at the greenhouse for that period."

Oh right, the experiment. Part of her had hoped that he came over for her, with something non school related. "You know I don't really remember the way there. Maybe we could walk together?" She asked him innocently. She had definitely remembered where the greenhouse was, but she didn't want to miss out on the chance to spend more alone time with him.

"Oh okay... uhh we can meet at your locker?"

"Sounds great. It's in hall C along the left side of the corridor." She explained.

"Yeah I know where it is." Mike mumbled, barely audible. His eyes widened in horror at his admission. Thankfully she hadn't heard him as she gave him a questioning look. "I mean ill find it..."

Way to play it cool Mike...

He continued to stare at her for a few minutes before he realized what he was doing. He pulled himself together and managed to murmur out a goodbye.

"Well I guess I'll see you later..." He said awkwardly.

"Bye Mike." Elle replied softly.

"Bye Mike!" Max repeated, her voice surprising Mike. He hadn't noticed her sitting there. That seems to happen a lot when he was near Elle.

"Oh hi Max. I uhh didn't see you." Elle smiled at the politeness in his

tone.

"Of course you didn't." Max said cryptically. Elle shot her a look quickly.

"Right, well, see ya." Mike said suddenly before whipping around and walking quickly back over to his friends.

Elle heard Lucas yell "That was so smooth" to his tall friend before he slumped into his chair, not daring to look back over to Elle and Max again for the rest of the lunch period.

Mike was waiting for Elle when she reached her locker, his tall frame leaning against them as he waited for to show up. He had on his usual outfit of dark trousers and collared shirt and woolly sweater combo. How many of those sweaters did he own?

He lifted himself off the lockers when he saw her approach, his mouth curving into that crooked smile in greeting.

"Hey, you ready to go grow some plants?" He said excitedly.

She laughed at his dorky comment. "Let's do it!" She replied back with a similar smile, his enthusiasm infectious.

She quickly grabbed the notebook from her locker before starting to follow him down the hall.

"So I thought maybe we could introduce another spectrum of light today for the experiment. It might cause the growth factor of the plant to-"

"Elle!" A voice shrilled from behind her, cutting off Mike mid-sentence.

Elle and Mike turned around to face the direction of the voice. Trina was walking towards them, her high ponytail bobbing as she walked.

"Elle, where are you off too?" Trina took a second to take in Mike standing close to Elle before turning back to her with a confused expression. "And why aren't you in your gear?"

Elle looked down at her jeans and t-shirt combo, unsure what she was referring to. "Uhh what are you talking about?"

"The emergency practice Jennifer called today." Trina said knowingly. "For the cheer tournament next week..."

"Shit, I totally spaced." She also totally didn't care, but she didn't want to let the other girls in the team down. She turned to Mike and winced at the look on his face. His previous smile now disappeared from his face. "Mike I'm so sorry. You've worked hard on this experiment and I've been like the worst lab partner ever."

"It's okay Elle. Go and attend to your cheerleading duties." He plastered a smile as he said it, hoping she wouldn't notice that fakeness behind it. He was really looking forward to a period alone with her, to be near her and talk to her without interruptions.

He felt her squeeze his arm softly and she spoke up at him. "I'll make it up to you, I swear." She began to walk alongside a curious Trina; before she turned around quickly to shout once more at him. "I'll see you in detention!"

Max had dragged Elle to the back of the detention room when she had attempted to take a desk at the front near their detention buddies, Dustin and Mike, who had taken seats at the front again.

"What are you doing?" She whispered harshly, "You don't sit at the front in detention Elle, they see everything." Max nodded to the large desk at the front of the room as she said it. Elle assumed 'they' meant the assigned teacher to watch them.

She couldn't help but feel a little disappointed as Max lead her away from where Mike was seated. She had wanted to sit close to him, to watch him concentrate over whatever he was doing, to perhaps catch a glimpse at what had kept him so preoccupied. She found herself fascinated by him yesterday and unable to think about anything else but that furrowed brow that made her heart jump yesterday.

She noticed Mike watching the short exchange between the girls with a curious gaze and offered him a sweet smile and a wave before

taking a seat next to Max. His cheeks reddened instantly that she had caught him looking but he managed to return the smile before ducking his head back down to his notebook, his dark hair covering his embarrassment.

Mr Mitchell suddenly walked through the door frame, he had sweat dripping from his forehead and his breathing was erratic. Not surprising really, considering his large size and the long walk from the economics classroom to the back of the school.

Max nudged Elle's side with her elbow. "This is going to be fun." Her mouth reaching up in to a devious smile.

Elle wanted to ask her how the hell detention was going to be fun but before she could Mr Mitchell started to speak from the front of the room.

"Alright, well I guess detention starts now." he stated in an uninterested tone and sat down at the teacher desk, the chair squeaking at his sudden weight.

Elle saw him continuously check his watch for the next few minutes before suddenly standing up.

"I have an important call to make, it may be a while. But I will be back to check every now and then. So, just don't go anywhere." He looked over the room once more, taking a quick memory of their faces before leaving the room and heading down the hall.

Max immediately stood up and walked over to the doorframe and peered her head around the side.

"Like clock work." She mumbled, mostly to herself. "Elle let's go."

Elle stood up and walked over to Max, unsure of where they were going but trusting her friend regardless.

It was Dustin who spoke up. His attention immediately shifting from his trigonometry homework to the red-headed girl standing near the door. "Where we going?" He asked excitedly.

Max sneered at him in disbelief. "*WE* aren't going anywhere," Max

said, emphasising the 'we' he referred, "Elle and I aren't going to stay in this dank room for the next two hours."

Mike was the next to speak. "We can't go anywhere. Mr Mitchell will be back and we will all be stuck here another week."

"Again, not sure how this ended up as a we situation." Max said annoyingly.

"Max, they can come too. We can't leave them here to die of boredom." Elle said quietly, maybe she would finally get the chance to talk to Mike again without being interrupted this time.

"Ugh fine. But if they get us caught, it's on you."

"Hold up!" Mike whispered yelled at the other 3 as they started to move out the door. "Am I the only sane person here right now? Mr Mitchell said he will be back to check on us. Don't you think he will notice all of us missing?"

"Listen Wheeler, Mr Mitchell will currently be five minutes into his hour and a half nap in the teachers lounge, so we have 70 minutes to do whatever the hell we want. Time is ticking. Are you in or out?"

Mike looked at Dustin who was nodding profusely at him, a goofy grin plastered on his face since Max said they could join them. He was about to say no, he couldn't get in trouble again this week, his mom would kill him. But it was Elle's soft voice say his name that made him change his mind almost instantly.

"Please Mike. It will be fun." She pleaded. He braved a look at her. She pulled out the big guns, her face looking like a lost puppy with those big brown eyes and downturned mouth. How could he possibly turn her down when she was looking at him like that, it was impossible.

"Okay fine. But only if we can check the teacher's lounge first. Just to be sure. " He grumbled in response.

"Yay!" Elle squealed, her outward enthusiasm at his decision causing her to blush slightly. Mike's heart fluttered at her reaction. Was she excited he was coming or was she just excited to not have to spend

the next hour or so in this dreary room? *It's not because of you dummy. She clearly she doesn't want to be in this room any longer.* His thoughts answered for him and bringing him back to reality.

They were all huddled around the door of the teachers lounge, their heads squashed together as they all looked through the built in window. Right there on the old beige lounge chair was Mr Mitchell, spread across its length and fast asleep.

"Happy now Wheeler? No one knows detention like Max Mayfield." Max stated matter of factly.

"Did you just use yourself in third person?" Mike snickered back.

"Yes I did so shut up and let's go before you let us waste any more time of your nerdy shit." Mike narrowed his eyes at her before falling in line behind Dustin as they followed Max down the hall.

A few minutes later they had reached the doors to the cafeteria. Mike stopped in his tracks in surprise.

"We have the whole school to mess around in and we come to cafeteria?" Mike asks, the others stopping to stare at him.

"First stop is food of course." Max replied, her hand reached out to open the cafeteria doors. Dustin, who was behind her beaming in delight at her comment, mouthed an 'I told you so' to Mike.

"I don't know about you guys but I'd rather not eat anything else that comes out of that kitchen." Elle said quietly, her face contorted in disgust at the memory of the slop that had served for lunch.

Mike smiled at her in agreement.

"I know for a fact lunch lady Phyllis hoards the good shit for herself." Max insisted confidently.

"Do you think there is pudding?" Dustin said excitedly.

"Probably... Look why don't we go in and you two stay on lookout?" Max grabbed Dustin by the sleeve of his shirt and pulled him through the door.

Mike walked over to join Elle where she stood beside the cafeteria doors. They stood facing each other, Elle having to lift her chin higher to face him, his tall frame towering over her.

"I'm sorry I couldn't help with the experiment today. You must think I'm the worst lab partner ever..." Elle apologized suddenly.

"Why would I think that?" Mike asked, confused by her apology.

"Well I feel like I've hardly helped with the whole project."

"You don't need to apologize Elle." Mike said, ever the gentleman. "I'm happy to do that stuff for you... I mean for us... For the experiment..."

Mike mentally face palmed himself before continuing again. "The plants are all starting to sprout. I have been visiting the greenhouse every afternoon since we planted them to see how they are doing. The hydrangeas have been..." Mike started to ramble excitedly about the experiments progress so far.

Elle watched captivated as his brain ticked overtime to get the information out. God he was so smart. Probably the smartest person she's ever met and she didn't think it was nerdy at all. In fact, she thinks it's kind of cool that he knows so much about this stuff. She didn't know any other boy like him and he fascinated her to no end.

Elle suddenly realized that he had mentioned attending to the plants every afternoon. Did he do this by himself? Why wouldn't he ask her to help? She decided to cut off his rambling to ask him directly.

"Mike?"

"Yeah?" Mike replied, a little out of breath from rambling.

"Did you just say that you visit the greenhouse every afternoon to water them?"

"Uhh yeah. They have to be watered every day. We don't want them to die and the whole experiment to fail."

"Why didn't you ask me to help?" Elle murmured, a little sad that he

hadn't wanted her to come to these little trips out the greenhouse. She thought they were meant to be partners.

"MIKE! I FOUND THE CHOCOLATE PUDDING!" Dustin's voice shouted from behind the doors, covering Elle's soft one.

"OKAY!" He yelled back, annoyed he hadn't heard Elle in front of him.

"Sorry about him. What did you say?" Mike asked, his voice back to its normal soft spoken tone.

"Don't worry about it." Elle began, before quickly changing her mind. "Just next time you go to the greenhouse, how about we go together? I can't let you do everything yourself."

He had never had a lab partner before who actually wanted to help. Most of the time having to do all the work himself and sharing the credit. He pretty much expected it now being the smartest kid in their class. But Elle wanting to work together filled him with so much joy he could no longer hold back and smiled widely at her. He was happy to spend more time with her, even if it was school related.

"Come on, we better go help them." Elle said with a giggle, noticing the goofy grin that spread across his face.

It was Max's idea. She had blurted it at as they were stuffing their faces with chocolate pudding outside on the football bleachers.

"We should go swimming!" She had said suddenly. Thw other three turned to her in surprise.

"Swimming? Its still cold out..." Mike had been the first to speak since she mentioned it.

"It's a heated pool genius." Max offered in response. "I thought you said he was the smartest kind in the school." Max remarked to Elle, nudging her slightly.

Elle lowered her to hide the blush that had formed at her friend revealing that she had told Max about Mike.

She talks about me? *Mike thought to himself. His thoughts running wild with what else she had said about him. He had forgotten all about the swimming thing until Dustin spoke up.*

"Swimming sounds fun!" Dustin agreed, having so far gone along with everything Max had suggested. Like a new puppy following his owner.

Now here they were lined up beside the pool, Max using her hair clip to open the locked door.

"What are we waiting for?" The red-headed girl exclaimed before stripping down to her underwear and throwing herself into the water.

Dustin stood wide eyed at her before ripping his own clothes off and following her in.

"Are you guys getting in or what?" he said as he came up from underneath the water. His curly water now sticking to the sides of his face.

Mike looked at Elle expectantly.

"Yeah, no way. My hair will look like Dustin's if it gets wet." She explained, shaking her head in response to Mike's questioning gaze.

"Hey! My mum said my hair is one of kind!" Dustin guffawed back at Elle's comment.

"Naw, does your mum also cut the crusts off your sandwiches?" Max teased in response, a chuckle forming on her lips.

"No! She said crusts are for growing boys." Dustin said, the words leaving his mouth before his brain could stop them.

Max burst into laughter before he splashed her with water, she choked slightly as some of it went into her mouth.

"Oh you are dead." She swam over and dunked his head underwater with her hands.

Elle and Mike watched their friends for a minute before sharing a knowingly look.

"Idiots." They said at the same time, both laughing at their similar thoughts.

Elle gestured to the bleachers to the side of the room. "Do you want to sit down?"

"Yeah, sure." He replied quietly before following her away from the loud laughing and splashing coming from Max and Dustin.

They sat opposite each other, one leg over either side of the bleacher. They were close together, their knees close enough to touch. Mike tried to ignore the sudden wash of her vanilla scented perfume as it wafted towards him.

An awkward silence had drifted over them. Mike had wanted to say something to break it, but he couldn't form coherent thoughts with her this close to him. He was glad when she finally said something.

"You know what this reminds me of?" She pointed to the chaos down at the end of the pool before continuing. "The Breakfast Club."

Mike looked at her clueless. "Is that some sort of school club?"

"What? No." She stated in surprise. "Like the movie? You know John Hughes, Molly Ringwald?"

"I don't think I've seen it."

"Oh you have to! It's like my favorite movie. Molly Ringwald is like my idol. She's so cool and pretty." She said admiringly.

So are you. Mike thought to himself.

"Sorry, what did you say?" Elle asked him, barely able to hear the words that mumbled out of his mouth.

Shit, did he say that out loud?

"I said I don't know it."

"Oh. Well maybe we should watch it sometime." She said shyly, hoping her would pick up on the 'we' part.

Did he just hear that properly? Did Elle just say that they, THEY, watch a movie together? Mike swallowed the huge lump that had formed in his throat, his brain barely managing to form a smile in response.

"What's your favorite movie?" She asked him, not wanting to waste this opportunity to get know the cute guy who was blushing madly in front of her right now.

Mike suddenly felt really nervous. Man why did he have to like such nerdy things. She was going to think he's the biggest geek ever. "It's uhh" He paused slightly in hesitation. Here we go... "Star Wars." He mumbled out finally.

"Oh I love Star Wars!" She replied excitedly. Mike did a double take, shocked at her reaction. Most people thought that Star Wars was for losers like him.

"You do?"

"Of course. Who wouldn't want mind powers like Yoda?" Mike couldn't believe it. If he wasn't a goner before, he was definitely one now. Elle is almost too good to be true.

Mike flashed his famous crooked smile and she felt the butterflies rise in her stomach again. She spent six whole months with Billy and not once did she feel like she did now with Mike looking at her. How can one boy's dorky smile make her feel so...

She pulled herself together, offering a smile that in return sent Mike's heart beating faster. Everything around them seemed to disappear as they smiled at each other, the noises from Max and Dustin turning into nothing but white noise.

The intenseness of his gaze made Elle look away suddenly.

"You probably shouldn't say this to anyone else, but it's also Max's favorite movie too." She confessed to him.

"Huh, I would have guessed something like Friday the 13th."

She shook her head slightly, smiling in the direction of Max and

Dustin, who were still dunking each other and splashing around.

"I better not tell Dustin. He will think of something other stupid plan to get her attention and we will end up with another two weeks of detention." Mike added, his eyes rolling at his friends ridiculousness.

"How did you guys end up in detention anyway?" Elle asked curiously.

"It was Dustin's stupid idea. He wanted to put a whole bunch of Red Vines packets into Max's locker for Valentine's Day. But he needed the locker number. So he distracted Penelope while I snuck in behind her and took the combination numbers file from the back office. It probably would have worked had Jennifer Hayes not come into the office with a bright blue face and screamed about calling her mother. Penelope turned around and saw me with the file in hand." He explained slowly, still clearly annoyed at Dustin about getting him in trouble.

Elle burst out laughing at the mention of Jennifer Hayes and her bright blue face. Mike's annoyed expression softened at the sound of her laugh. *God she looked beautiful when she laughed.*

"I'm sorry about that." She settled down, wiping a tear that had formed at the corner of her eye before continuing. "Red Vines are Max's favorite. That was really sweet of you for helping him." Elle grabbed his hand and squeezed it as she said it before letting it go quickly and returning her hand to her lap. Mike immediately missed the feel of her skin on his, wanting to reach out and keep her small fingers entwined with his. Instead he just let the corners of his lips rise into a soft smile.

"I guess you would have heard why I'm in here then." Elle said quietly. The rumor mill was running wild throughout the school about Billy and his precious truck. Elle hadn't heard anything yet about Billy and Jennifer. She hoped Mike hadn't either. For some reason she felt like a loser, like someone wanting someone else over her made her one.

"Will told us yesterday..." Mike replied carefully. He didn't want to talk about that idiot Billy. And what an idiot he was. How could

anyone give up the perfect girl that was sitting before him? "Billy's an idiot. You deserve someone better."

"I do?" Elle asked, lost in her thoughts of self pity.

"Of course! You know, like someone who will make you feel like you're the only girl in the room."

Someone like you. Elle thought to herself. The butterflies roared in her stomach, she could feel her heart beat so fast it felt like it was going to come out of her chest. She wanted to lean over and pull him towards her.

"Shit! Is that the time?" Max shouted from the water at the other side of the room, pointing to the large clock on the wall. "We have to go. Like now!"

They had barely made it back in time before Mr Mitchell walked back in to the detention room. His hair disheveled at the back and a small wet patch of drool on the shoulder of his shirt. He hadn't noticed Max's and Dustin's wet hair and the latter's inside out shirt.

They all burst out into laughter when he left the room after telling them he had checked a few times to see them working quietly throughout the past two hours.

Later that night as she lay in bed, Elle couldn't help but feel giddy about Mike's words to her in the pool arena. She no longer missed Billy or felt sad that he was no longer around. As she drifted off to sleep, it was Mike's crooked grin, the one that turned her stomach into a circus and her heart into a hammer drill in her chest, which was the final thing in her mind. Maybe Max was right. Maybe he was her nerd prince.